
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 2131

Brief Description: Concerning the master licensing service.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway and Springer; by request of Department of Licensing.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes a performance-based grant program funded by the Master License Service Account, to assist public agencies that issue business licenses and wish to join the Department of Licensing's Master License Service.
- Sets a limit on the overall amount that can be granted, at \$750,000 in a fiscal year.

Hearing Date: 2/28/05

Staff: Rebekah Ward (786-7106).

Background:

The Master License Service (MLS) is a self-supporting service bureau in the Department of Licensing that is charged with providing a consolidated "one-stop" state and local government business licensing service for Washington's citizens. Certain state agencies are required to participate in the MLS, but cities and counties are not. Currently, ten state agencies and five cities participate in the MLS involving over 100 different licenses. Among the participating agencies are:

1. Department of Labor and Industries
2. Department of Revenue
3. Department of Agriculture
4. Liquor Control Board
5. Department of Health
6. Employment Security Department
7. Department of Ecology
8. Washington State Lottery
9. Secretary of State's Office
10. Department of Licensing

The participating cities are:

11. Richland
12. Sammamish

13. Spokane Valley
14. Tumwater
15. Bellevue

Under the MLS, each participating agency/city includes its new and renewable licenses as part of this single process. The MLS manages all paperwork between the business license applicant or license holder and the partner agency. The MLS maintains a centralized business licensing data system on behalf of the agencies; all have access to their records and information. The MLS collects funds for all licenses and transmits it electronically to the appropriate jurisdiction. Businesses are able to apply for a business license via the Internet, by mail or at any one of the MLS participating agencies/cities.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Licensing (Department) is directed to administer a performance-based grant program to provide funds to public agencies that issue business licenses and want to join the Department's Master License System.

The Department may determine the order and amounts of the grants considering listed criteria, which include the readiness of the public agency to participate, the number of renewable licenses, and the reduced regulatory impact to businesses subject to licensure relative to the overall investment required by the Department.

The Department must invite and encourage local jurisdictions that issue business licenses to participate in the program. There is a limit placed on the total amount of grants to a maximum of \$750,000 in any one fiscal year. The dedicated Master License Account is identified as the source of funds for the grant program.

Rules Authority: The bill does not contain provisions addressing the rule-making powers of an agency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 23, 2005.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.